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ABSTRACT

The way in which the academic community perceives the pedagogic behaviors associated with women's effective teaching at the college level can have widespread ramifications for women who hope for careers in postsecondary education. One of the major purposes of this investigation was to compare how faculty in masculinely- and femininely-stereotyped teaching disciplines, as represented by engineering and home economics, respectively, perceived selected pedagogic behaviors of women professors in their fields. It was assumed that if no stereotyped perceptions existed, engineering and home economics would have perceived their women professors' pedagogic behaviors similarly. Two forms of the same questionnaire were devised for faculty in engineering and home economics throughout the 19 California state colleges and universities to rate the pedagogic behaviors of women professors. The implications of the research findings are that the pedagogic behaviors of women professors in masculinely-stereotyped teachings disciplines are perceived differently than the same pedagogic behaviors of women professors in femininely-stereotyped teaching disciplines. Masculinely-stereotyped academic communities tend to perceive women professors as "less effective" on the majority of the effective pedagogic behaviors studied. (Author/LBH)

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PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN PROFESSORS' PEDAGOGIC BEHAVIORS IN MASCULINELY AND FEMININELY-STEREOTYPED TEACHING DISCIPLINES

by

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Introduction

"What's a nice girl like you doing in a job like this?" This question is often asked of women working in occupations stereotyped as masculine but is seldom asked of women working in occupations stereotyped as feminine and as "fitting for women."

Many men and women perceive the behaviors of women stereotypically. They see women as passive, nurturing, dependent, soft, emotional, warm, and non-competitive. A widespread notion is that such behaviors militate against a woman's successful performance in occupations which are typically seen as masculine or male-dominated. Another widespread notion that follows from such an idea is that women in masculinely-stereotyped fields must possess the behaviors considered masculine to be successful. Examples of such masculine behaviors are independence, assertiveness, aggressiveness, hardness, control, competitiveness, coldness, and lack of emotionality.

Women professors in masculinely-stereotyped and femininely-stereotyped teaching disciplines typify women in masculinely-stereotyped and femininely-stereotyped occupations. Thus, the way in which the academic community perceives the pedagogic behaviors that are associated with women's effective teaching

at the college level can have widespread ramifications for women who aspire to a career in post-secondary education.

One of the major purposes of this investigation was to compare how faculty in masculinely and femininely stereotyped teaching disciplines, as represented by engineering and home economics respectively, perceived selected pedagogic behaviors of women professors in their fields. It was assumed that if no stereotyped perceptions existed, engineering and home economics would have perceived their women professors' pedagogic behaviors similarly.

Procedure

Two forms of the same questionnaire were devised for faculty in engineering and home economics throughout the 19 California state colleges and universities to rate the pedagogic behaviors of women professors. A total of 647 faculty questionnaires were mailed and the useable response rate obtained was 60.5 percent. Of those professors who received engineering questionnaires, 299 were useable. Of those professors who received home economics questionnaires, 93 were useable.

To obtain the faculty who were to participate in the survey, an extensive perusal of the 1976/1977 catalogs of the 19 California State Colleges and Universities was made. In the rare case of institutions that had only one catalog printed for several years usage, the latest catalog was selected to obtain faculty names and titles. The decision was made to include every person who as indicated by the

current catalog represented full-time, active, instructional personnel in engineering and home economics. Noteworthy was the fact that the researcher used her first two initials in correspondence with faculty members rather than her full name to disguise her sex and to minimize the influence of the sexual variable. Due to the fact that the researcher was associated with a masculinely-stereotyped department, criminology, many professors both from engineering and home economics assumed that the researcher was a man and in commenting or adding additional information, addressed the investigator as "Mr. Masters."

The teaching behaviors compared included those that faculty were in a position to appraise. Engineering and home economics faculty were asked to rate each item on a five-point scale, ranging from poor to excellent. There were 11 items on each questionnaire dealing with the pedagogic behaviors of flexibility, professional manner, communication, voice, professional background, sensitivity, cooperativeness, initiative, punctuality, innovation, and overall image of teaching ability.

Findings

The research findings include the following:

(1) There was a large percentage of full professors in engineering and a large percentage of assistant professors in home economics (see Table 1).

(2) Home economics was more likely to employ men than was engineering likely to employ women professors (see Table 2).

(3) Engineering faculty and students perceived women professors as less effective than home economics faculty and students perceived women professors on the teaching behaviors concerning interpersonal relations, professional manner, and overall image of teaching ability(see Table 3).

(4) Engineering faculty perceived women professors as less effective than home economics faculty perceived women professors on the teaching behaviors concerning flexibility, communication, articulation, background, cooperation, initiative, punctuality, and innovation (see Table 4).

(5) Engineering rated women professors' teaching behaviors lower than did home economics.

(6) Home economics was more apt to employ and have a man as a chairperson than was engineering apt to employ and have a woman as a chairperson (see Table 2).

(7) Engineering and home economics males perceived women professors as less effective than engineering and home economics females on all pedagogic behaviors studied.

(8) Engineering faculty perceived women professors' teaching behaviors as less effective than did home economics faculty at each professional rank.

(9) Personal contact with women engineering professors can make a difference in how women professors' pedagogic behaviors are perceived.

Conclusions

The implications of the research findings are that the pedagogic behaviors of women professors in masculinely-stereotyped

TABLE 1

Percentage of Engineering and Home Economics Faculty According to Academic Rank

Rank	Teaching Discipline	
	Engineering (n = 294)	Home Economics (n = 91)
Full Professor	58.5	29.7
Associate Professor	29.3	29.7
Assistant Professor	11.2	35.2
Other	1.0	5.4
	100.0	100.0

TABLE 2

Percentage of Men and Women in Engineering and Home Economics According to Position in the Academic Community

Sex	Engineering					Home Economics				
	Under-grad	Grad-uate	Prof.	Chair.	Other	Under-grad	Grad-uate	Prof.	Chair.	Other
Male	94.1	96.7	98.8	100.0	100.0	0.0	3.8	12.0	20.0	0.0
Female	5.9	3.3	1.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	96.2	88.0	80.0	100.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
n =	(255)	(30)	(253)	(30)	(10)	(93)	(26)	(83)	(5)	(5)

TABLE 3

Percentage Distribution on Perceived Overall Image of Teaching Ability of Women Engineering and Home Economics Professors from a Sample of the California State College and University System, According to Academic Community

Overall Image	Academic Community	
	Engineering	Home Economics
Poor	2.7	1.1
Below Average	7.4	3.3
Average	67.1	47.3
Above Average	17.1	32.4
Excellent	5.7	15.9
	100.0	100.0
	n = (403)	(182)

TABLE 4

Percentage Distribution on Background of Women Engineering and Home Economics Professors from a Sample of the California State College and University System, According to Faculty

Background	Faculty	
	Engineering	Home Economics
Poor	1.1	1.3
Below Average	31.1	12.7
Average	49.3	24.1
Above Average	13.9	29.1
Excellent	4.8	32.9
	100.0	100.0
	n = (209)	(79)

Note: $\chi^2 = 59.8125$; df = 4; $p < .05$; significant at the .001 level.

teaching disciplines are perceived differently than the same pedagogic behaviors of women professors in femininely-stereotyped teaching disciplines. Masculinely-stereotyped academic communities tend to perceive women professors as "less effective" on the majority of the effective pedagogic behaviors studied as compared to femininely-stereotyped academic communities that tended to perceive women professors as "more effective" on the same pedagogic behaviors. The results of the study could be generalized to be true of the larger population of women professors in masculinely-stereotyped and femininely-stereotyped teaching disciplines as well as women professors in engineering and home economics.

There is little doubt that such perceptions of women professors can affect the attitudes and decisions of the most distinguished and objective academic mind. Such perceptions can affect an individual, subliminally, and, thus can work to prevent the employment of qualified women academicians in all teaching disciplines.